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Tongo Festivals, Dances and Marriage Customs

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TONGO FESTIVALS, DANCES AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

PRELIMINARY

Eight miles South of Bolgatanga is the land of the Talensis called Tongo. As one comes to a stop either at the market place or Tongorana's house, and looks round, there is nothing to differentiate the place from any other in the Northern and Upper Regions, save perhaps the chain of hills in semi-circle from the South to East.

But do not be decieved; it is a place that holds interest for the historian; as well as a challenge to the anthropologist. Above all it is a place of deep culture that will interest many people, which culture wonderfully enough has not been in any way affected or spoiled by the impact of the white man's occupation. It is a culture that has been solicitously preserved from ancient times.

The great festivals and dances centering in this part of the Region are already well known in some parts of the country. I and some others hope that they will become better known and be a national attraction for tourists.

This little work is a contribution towards that end and an attempt to furnish people who come up here for the great celebrations with some idea of the great festivals of Tongo. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Mensah, the Regional Art and Culture Organiser in Bolgatanga. It was he who encouraged me to undertake this work.

I am also grateful to all those who have in any way helped me in this work.

GENERAL

"The Great Festivals of the Talensis constitute a single cycle".

This cycle of the Great Festivals is the medium through which the Talensis' ritual system is regularly, obligatorily and conspicuously observed.

The Talensis have their sections overlapping one another and merge into one another; they also overlap adjacent regions of non-Taleng clans; but they are differentiated by the index of the Great Festivals.

The sacred calendar of the Talensis runs like dots on a circle. Like the Akans (c.f. Ghana Reconstructs Vol. 2, No. 10) and unlike many of the other tribes in the Upper Region, there are two kinds of calendars among the Talensis. First there is the civil calendar which reckons the week as consisting of seven days (Atene, Atalata, Alariba, Alamis, Arizumah, Asibi and Lahir); then there is the sacred calendar which has no fixed or stable week but runs like dots on a circle.

The days on which they start their festivals are known only approximately, because they follow the appearance of the moon. Sometimes some sections are not sure of the day the moon first appears. Hence there are mis-calculations; such

was the case in 1964, when the time came for the Golgo dance.

Ethnically there are two major groups in Tongo: the superimposed group known as the Namoos and the alleged autochthonous inhabitants who call themselves the "Real Talensis". Though these two groups are now wholly amalgamated, each group still keeps its own cultural dance and Festival. The Namoos have their Gingango dance and Daa Festival, while the aborigines have their Golgo dance and Bogrem Festival.

However, for the purposes of this article I refer to them all as Talensis; this is also the name by which they are known to the tribes outside Tongo.

GINGANGO AND DAA

Gingango is a name derived from the Mamprusi word Ginganga, a drum used by the Mamprusis for beating to a dance. Today the Gingango as known in Tongo is the very same Ginganga which the Mamprusis still use; Gingango has now also come to mean the dance performed when this drum is being played.

Before saying anything about this Gigango dance, it is necessary to give a little history of the founder of the people who perform this dance.

Mosore was his name. When he first arrived at the hills of Tongo about 280 years ago, he brought with him five sons, two daughters and four wives. On his arrival he found that there were only five people with their small families living scattered here and there in the district. They were: Gbezug Tindana, Wakii Tindana, Digal Tindana, Kaar Tindana and Baar Tindana. The evidence suggests that he arrived during the dry season.

The reason for his migration was his desire for peace. Having just assumed the Nalerigu throne by conquest, he found himself threatened by another man who was mobilizing his own forces to dethrone him. Being a man who had seen a lot of bloodshed and now wished to settle in peace with his family, he abdicated and came to Tongo with his family, carying along with him the royal traditional drum of Nayiri called Ginganga.

Armed with guns he and his family arrived in Tongo. They were spotted immediately by Gbezug Tindana, who was so afraid that he ran away to the hills about a mile from his house, and hid there with his family. He had been careful to hide the only small spring of water from Musore and his family. But being directed by bees, Musore's sons found the spring covered with a shea-butter pot. They opened this and saw the small spring of water.

The whole family drank from this. As the Gbenzug Tindana, who was called Genet had run to the hills and left his house empty, Musore and his family entered there to spend the night. Meanwhile leaves of fig trees were strewn around the spring. In the evening the sons of Musore went to this spring to watch for the man who was living in the area. At dawn Genet came to fetch water secretly but he walked on the dry fig leaves and the noise he made woke up the sons of Musore who were in hiding there. They got up and surrounded him and took him up to their father. He was kept in custody till the morning when Musore asked him some questions including the question why he hid the water spring. Genet replied that he did so in order that Musore and his family should

find no water in the area and so would pass on to another region.

Musore then assured Genet that he, Musore, was a peaceful man and would like to settle with him as friend. Genet agreed and called back his own family from their hiding place and the two families lived together in Genet's house until such time as Musore could build his own house.

Musore upon being informed that Genet had relatives living within a radius of three miles, made him call them so that he could see them.

According to one story, Genet then called his four brothers and presented them to Musore. These four brothers of Genet are: Wakii Tindana, Kaar Tindana, Digal Tindana and Doziok the Baare Tindana. But another story has it that Genet had only two brothers; Doziok from Baare and Wakii Tindana; and to these two were given the two daughters of Musore in marriage. The daughter married to Doziok was called Tene. She had four sons by her husband.

The Wakii Tindana's wife was called Lamis; she gave him five sons. Yikwendaan as Wakii Tindana is also called, gave his daughter to Musore's son called Nakamun. It must be remembered that Genet and his relatives had sons and daughters already when Musore arrived.

As the rains came they all sowed and harvested a good crop. When the harvesting was just finishing, Musore sent out one of his sons to Doziok to bring back from him a goat in order to sacrifice to his Gingango drum. The goat was taken without the knowledge and permission of Doziok; and when, therefore, he saw him carrying away his goat, he demanded to know the reason for the apparent robbery. Musore's son answered that as he was a stranger he was not supposed to possess anything yet, so he could catch any animal he found for his Gingango. Hence the custom even now of taking a goat from the original Talensis every other year without permission in order to use the skin for sowing this very drum.

After performing his first New Year ritual ceremonies, Musore and his family performed the first tribal dance ever to be performed in this area, called Gingango. And this is one of the familiar traditional dances that is repeated every year here. I shall now go on to say something about the time this celebration takes place.

TIME

First however it is necessary to get an idea of Talensi months. The months are different from those of the white man both as regards their length and sometimes as regards their number. They count about 12 months in a year. In chronological order they are:

1.	Daa mwaring	October
2.	Bogram mwaring	November
3.	Kabulihim mwaring	December
4.	Kwuort mwaring (Fulanfuk)	January
5.	Goldiema mwaring	February
6.	Golgo mwaring	March

7.	Sikweng mwaring	April
8.	Simahug mwaring	May
9.	Mwariwuuk mwaring	June
10.	Nachiog mwaring	July
11.	Nabiit mwaring	August
12.	Kuom mwaring	September

Their new year starts in the middle of October. As regards to the length of each month, this is known by the number of days the moon is visible.

The first Gingango dance in the year is performed in the month of Kuom. On the 3rd day after the appearance of this moon, after being informed officially by Baare Tindana that this is the month of Kuom, the chief of Tongo consults a sooth sayer. The Sooth Sayer will make known the person who will have to carry out the Gingango drum that year.

On the 5th day of the moon's appearance, the chief meets with his elders to give to Noordingre's son an animal in order to make a sacrifice before the drum is brought out. The one to sacrifice to the drum is always the senior man in the Puhig section. At present Noordingre's son is the eldest and so he makes this sacrifice.

In the afternoon of that same day the sacred drum is carried out from its room in the chief's house by the man chosen a few days before by the Sooth Sayer. The Gingango dance then takes place in the afternoon for the first time in the year. From this day onwards until seven days before the new moon appears, the Gingango dance goes on every day. There are no special observances nor sacrifices again till the Daa Festival.

This month of Kuom is also known as Gingang' diema; which means a month of mere Gingango dance; there are no ceremonies and no ritual performance besides what had taken place on the 5th day of the moon.

This Gingango dance begins again with the Daa month. And this brings us to Daa month and Festival. When this moon appears, Baari Tindana again goes to inform Tongorana that Koum month is over; we are now in Daa month. This announcement actually takes place around the 3rd of this month.

The dancing of Gingango goes on again till the 13th day of the appearance of the moon. On this day of the 13th everybody stays in the compound. No work is performed. This day is like the "Biblical Sabbath day" for the Jews. Its observance is stricter than the present day Christian Sunday. Not even walking about is allowed.

This day is set aside to honour all the dead. On this day the dead ancestors are supposed to dance Gingango also. The people will hang on the walls of their houses all the articles and costumes used for the dance. The dead ancestors are supposed to come and use them for their dance.

We shall see later on that those who perform the Golgo dance have a day exactly like this; we do not know who orginated the idea.

On the 14th day, Tongo people take their sacred drum to Baari for the final Gingango dance of that year.

There in Baari they perform Gingango dance from about 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. A few minutes before this dance ends, Baari men who have been hiding in their grove, send out one of their number who comes out and goes round the whole gathering of dancers and spectators sprinkling all with some water. No one in the crowd is allowed to ask what water is falling on him or her. When you come to this dance as a visitor you are sometimes warned by friendly natives of what is to come.

After this man has completed this ceremony, the whole group of men who have been hiding in the near-by sacred grove, come out dressed in skins and loin-cloths walking in a very solemn procession neither speaking nor singing. They walk round the whole crowd of dancers and spectators in this solemn mood three times; then proceed in single file to the chief Tindana's house where they start up their own dance which is Yongo. They dance till late in the night, and while they are dancing then Tongo people carry their Gingango away by the shortest path home. This is the last performance of that sacred drum for the year.

DAA FESTIVAL

The following day, which is the 15th day of the appearance of the moon, is the greatest day of all the days that are passed and that are to come. This is the day which all the dancers have been anticipating. On this day the elders of the Namoos all gather in the chief's house to offer him their homage. This is the opening day of their new year. Tongorana comes out dressed in his regalia to receive and return their New Year wishes. He gives them permission also to go back home and sacrifice to their ancestors. These elders then return home and impart the good wishes and blessings of the chief to the members of their compounds. In the evening every male who has reached the age of reason must make a sacrifice with a chicken or give it to his father to sacrifice for him. Many domestic birds and animals are usually killed on this day. The whole night is spent in revelling.

Friends go round wishing other friends a Happy New Year and share the new year meals together.

This Daa celebration continues for quite a few more days. The following day which is the 16th is a day of Tympana dance.

This is a dance which is performed in their original home of Mampurigu. It is the only day such a dance is performed in the year. It is one of the easiest dances that can be learnt by anybody. It is performed with a very simple rhythm. And this is why although it is performed only once in the year anybody who has seen it once can never forget how to dance it. This Tympana dance is performed in the afternoon of this day at the chief's house.

Two Tympana's are played to give them the rhythm. The sung music for this dance is usually simple. The dance ends about 6:30 p.m. On this day the chief gives "Pito" to all the sons of those whose parents or ancestors have been chiefs in former times. They take this "pito" and a hen each and go home to sacrifice to their ancestors.

The 17th is another day for another special dance called "Benna Dance"; it is danced only by the elders of chief's descent. Much magical display with snakes and knives and toads takes place by these dancers. It is more a personal display than a dance. This dance takes place at Puhig over the traditional grave of Musore the first Tongo chief. For all the dances footwear is allowed except this one dance. It is strictly forbidden to go near this dancing ground in Puhig with any foorwear on, because it is the burial place of their great founder Musore as they themselves will tell you Visitors are usually politely informed of this by grown ups when they are drawing near with shoes or sandals on, while the children shout at you to take them off.

It is not only on this day that nobody is allowed to enter this area without any footwear but every day of the year it is forbidden. This day's dance takes place at the same hour as the one of the preceeding day.

On the 18th day is Yongo dance by Baari people at Tongorana's house. Tongo people went to Baari for their final Gingango dance and so Baari people now come to Tongo for a final Yongo dance. This reciprocal visit is to show the affinity that exists between them.

The 19th is the women's day. There is usually a big dance of Sankwigi on this day by all the women. Only women are allowed to perform this dance. In this respect it is quite different from all other dances; the women stand in a big circle singing and clapping their hands for two to dance at a time. When the two come out to dance they at first jump and then perform a vigorous dance with a very quick movement of the legs. It is naturally a dance for young women but the old women on this occasion never admit that they are old.

This Sankwigi dance takes place in Baari in their market square while Tongo women perform theirs at the Chief's house. The two groups dance in the afternoon. This really concludes the Daa Festival.

The name "DAA" comes from the sacred grove in Baari which bears this name. This is the sacred grove where the people of Baari go on the final day of Tongo people's Gingango dance, in the evening, to hide and come out to sacrifice after a few hours of meditation. It is the day of their Daa. Then as time went on the New Year festivity of all the Talensis took on this name. Really the name Daa has now come to mean a complimentary Harvest Festival and a New Year Festivity. It is at this time that the Talensis have just completed or about to complete their harvesting of the last crops. Their crops grow faster than the crops of any other people in the Upper and Northern Regions.

Daa also has the meaning of market in the Talensi Language; it is not sure whether the word Daa as a festival comes from this Daa as a market.

INSTRUMENTS AND DRUMS

Now let us see a little bit about the instruments and drums used for Gingango dance.

First, there are two drums for dancing Gingango; a big one and a small one. The small one which is covered at either end is the first and real Gingango drum. Traditionally it is the one brought by Musore the first chief of Tongo.

It is certainly over 400 years old. It was already the cherished sacred possession of Nalerigu royal house for many years before it was brought here. According to legend it was given mysteriously to the descendants of the Mamprusis even before they came to settle in Mamprusi land from the country of the Moshis. It was certainly possessed for about a hundred years before Musore brought it along with him to Gongo: and it is about 300 years now since Musore arrived in Tongo. (Cf. Dr. Fortes). I also calculated the time factor of Musore's arrival in Tongo from the number of chiefs that have reigned since Musore; giving them an average reign of ten years. In all there have been 28 chiefs who took up successive reigns in Tongo. (Cf. Summary at the end of the book).

The big drum which is the second one, is a comparatively recent one. It was made in Tongo here by the 5th chief of Tongo. This chief found out that as his people were scattered, the small one was not loud enough to be heard everywhere by all; so he ordered this bigger one to be made. It is about 250 years old. This is about the time Noordiegret Kumpator the 5th chief ot Tongo ordered it to be made.

If the skins of these two drums used for covering them are worn out or torn, the chief sends some one to catch a goat from any of the sections of the aborigines such as Baari or Gorogo. With these animals he will sacrifice them and cover them afresh with the new skins.

Sacrifice is made to the drums every other year or so. They are usually placed side by side and the last drops of the animals' blood are made to fall on them. After the Gingango dance in Baari the drums are put away and not touched again till the following year.

Some other people have Gingangos also; these can be used sometimes during the year when cultural dances are called for. The real traditional drums will never appear at other times than the Gingango and Daa months.

The dancers of Gingango also wear jingles around the ankles; these jingles are called "Nasarsis". They are worn on either foot; where as for Golgo they are worn on only one foot. These jingles are locally made by the few scattered black-smiths near the hills.

They make the dancing really lively. The people in the course of the year may dance without their gingango drums but never without these Nasarsis.

For their apparel to perform this dance, the traditional triangular loin cloth is worn around the waist with a turban around the head; while dancing they also hold, wave and shake a tail of cow or horse in one hand and sometimes a fan in the other hand. Of course these last two things are dispensable.

Then to go with Gingango dance also there are ten whistles; seven of which are kept in the house of Pilbazaa and three in the house of Bagna. These whistles seem to be only semi-sacred. They are not sacrificed to. They are blown only on three successive days in the year. These three days are the three days proceeding the great silent day in Gingango month. Usually this is the time Gingango dance is at its climax and so they wait till this time to bring them out and play for the dance. After these three days of performance they are carefully put away not to be touched again till the following year.

Women are never allowed to touch them. They are not allowed to touch the

ground; and if any person lets them touch the ground he has to pay a cow. These whistles are always kept by the same traditional families whereas the Gingango drums must be passed on to the family of the new chief at his accession.

The Gingango drums give a good rhythm for the dancing. The jingles make the dancing lively, the articles held in the hand add real grace to the movement, but the whistles seem to be unnecessary.

THE SECTIONS THAT DANCE IT

The dance is particular to the four sections which together in Talensi land is called Tongo: i.e. Puhig, Dekweng, Siog and Korig.

Pusi Namoo, Baari Yameriga and Shega can dance it because of their clanship ties with Tongo people.

BOGRAN

As some sections of Tongo finish celebrating their Daa Festival some other sections, i.e. the aborigines, start with their complementary harvest festival also.

This is called "BOGRAN". It is really the same festival as Daa only that it is celebrated by another category of Tongo people. The ritual performances in this Bogran is quite different from what is done during Daa festival.

First it starts around the 7th of the appearance of the (Bogran) moon. Also those sections who are bound to observe (Bogran) moon festival do so with slight variations from one another. They do not even start on the same day. We shall now go through this festival as it is celebrated by the section of Gbeogo.

Gbeogo people start this festival the day after Buchiug, Sie, Digal, Zandoya and Gorogo have started theirs. They start the same day as Yinduri and Gorogozuor people and that is two days after Wakii, Kpataar and Samiit people have started.

Early in the morning of their starting day Gbeogo people will gather in front of the Tindana's house. Since early morning this house is closed and no woman nor child is allowed to come out through the usual gates.

For nature's call and other necessities the women and children must go out over the back walls of the house and return to the house by the same way as soon as possible.

In front of this Tindana's house, as all the people gather, they give hens to the Tindana for the two sacrifices of that day. He gets all these hens and divides them equally for the home sacrifice and for the Tingwani Sacrifice. Each house owner brings at least one hen. Normally each one is supposed to bring hens according to the number of his dead ancestors that he is capable of remembering; but poverty and other reasons can mitigate this law. There are at present 30 houses in Gbeogo under their Tindana, and so at least there are

usually 30 hens then to be brought to the Tindana. The Tindana kills half of these hens in sacrifice right in front of his house in the presence of all the house holders while all the women and children are behind closed doors.

After this sacrifice has been performed and the meat cleaned and shared according to seniority, all rise up and follow the Tindana in procession to the Tingwani - the sacred grove where sacrifice is made to the Earth God.

For this procession, every one carries a new millet stalk of about 5 inches long. The rest of the hens are also carried in this procession to the Tingwani.

The stalk has two meanings for this people; first, it is a symbol of peace. In the olden days wherever there were groups fighting with bows and arrows and the Tindana went between the fighting groups with a millet stalk raised up, it was absolutely forbidden for anyone to let go another arrow. That was the end of the fighting; and if anybody chose to fight still, he never lived long and a curse would fall on his family.

The second meaning of the stalk is that God has given again that year new crops, and millet is the principle crop here; hence the carrying of these millet stalks to the Tingwani which is the sanctuary of the Earth God. Some of these millet stalks used in the procession can be seen at anytime in front of the Tindana's house.

At the Tingwani, everybody sits around while the remaining hens are sacrificed. The hens are plucked and the meat once more shared according to seniority. From here they all go back to their houses and then start with the New Year and Harvest Festival celebrations. The women and children of the Tindana's house are released after the Tingwani ritual performances.

It is the most important event of the year. The women and children are not allowed to hear what the people have to tell the spirits and what the spirits might have to tell them.

But one may ask why two sacrifices on this day at different places? The sacrifice at the Tindana's house is to the ancestral spirits, to thank them for having obtained new crops from the Earth God.

The sacrifice at the Tingwani is to thank the Earth God for the crops of that year and to ask him to keep them through the New Year. This reminds us of the two cults the Talensis have; the cult of the ancestral spirits and the cult of the Earth God. For, these people believe that their ancestors look after them by constant intercession with God and that ill-luck and some bodily ailments are signs of their ancestors anger or displeasure with them. Whereas prosperity from the land such as abundant food crops and regular rains to make the crops grow, and the avoidance of misfortunes such as epidemics, are all blessings of the Earth God.

For about a week, the celebrations of Bogran festival goes on in each major segment or sub-segment of the clan. The people usually perform Bala dance in the evening in any house where a few people can gather to have a big meal. The same dance takes place in the markets during these days.

The sections that observe this festival are the same that dance Golgo. However, during this time Golgo dance is not permitted. The festival ends

gradually. As the days go on, the celebrations die out little by little till after about a week when it is forgotten.

G O L G O

The origin of Golgo dance and celebrations and of the drums and instruments that accompany it, is rather obscure. The most probable origin of this dance is the following story: the dance is in connection with the sacrificing to the Bagre called "Mwuo". This Bagre was at first lying in the bush Gumona near Yinduri. Then one day Digar Tindana was directed by a sorcerer to go and sacrifice to this Mwuo in the bush, for, said the sorcerer, it is a thing with powers able to bring the country fertility and prosperity. So year in and year out, this man would go there with his relatives to sacrifice to this Bagri. After sacrificing they would dance round it with an improvised song before coming back home. One year, the chief of Tenzuk argued that as there was no water in that part of the bush and no decent place for dancing, the Mwuo should be brought home where sacrifice could be made and the dancing watched by every one else. So Kanbang Tindana went to the bush and brought the Mwuo to Tenzuk where it is at present.

This dance strictly speaking now is a performance going with the sowing festival. It takes place just before the first rains.

Golgo as a festival is centred on the "Earth Cult" as distinct from the "Ancestral Cult". It dramatises man's dependence on the fertility of the soil and on the rain for his livelihood; and the dependence of these on the mystical power of the earth. Its chief theme through all the rites and ceremonies of the festival is a plea for the beneficence of the earth in the approaching farming season. Consider this Golgo song:

"Tindan Mampae yelim teng no buogre
ni ba ing nara ti na;
Ninyeribo, yari mari ya nini la gourt
mwart tenga".

Translation: Tindan Mampae (Tenzuk Tindana) ask the earth and her meadows to give us early millet. Please, may you the false prophets stop going about to ruin the land with your false predictions.

Unfortunately the people take the opportunity of this festival also to frame songs against some individuals or clans. Consider the following song:

"Wakii pupielim zug bee ba na bang waa;
wuma kama ti palim ya Mwuo ni.
Ba mi luor ka buort nachimet;
bum barimabarima nam!
diega mum i nuor ka wol nachimet.

Translation: Were it not for the joyous celebrations of Wakii people, would the others ever know how to dance!
Every year we demonstrate to you at Mwuo;
fancy the ugly ones also trying to be like gentlemen!
Hopeless people!
Will the wild pig please shut his mouth and watch gentlemen in action.

Golgo then as a festival seeks to mobilize the goodwill of the earth for the prosperity and fertility of all the people and things of the country.

And so it happens that this festival, the month in which it is celebrated and the dance that goes with it, all have one and the same name "Golgo". The first Golgo Dance takes place in Golg'diema month, i.e. in February, without any sacrifice nor ceremonial performance, just the ordinary dance on any day that the moon is bright in that month. The real festivity comes only in the following month-Golgo mwaring - March.

About the 15th day of the appearance of the moon in this month, the Wakii Tindana makes a sacrifice in the presence of all the Tindanas of Wakii, asking God to give fertility to the women of the land, to the fruit trees and to the land itself. On the day after the sacrifice has been made, the Golgo dance takes place there in Wakii. This is called Golg'yiis.

On this day the people of this village will blow their sacred whistles in the morning and at noon. These whistles are about 50 in number and 9 inches in length. Nobody from that village is ever allowed to tell anyone the exact number of these sacred whistles.

Early morning every male will go to the house where these whistles are kept and blow one before returning home for breakfast. When this ceremony is over, the whistles are distributed to the same number of people; these people who are given them are divided into groups of four, five or seven, and each group with the whistles is sent to one of the paths leading into the village. Any person trying to leave the village at such an hour is more or less prevented by these people guarding the paths; and any person going to the village at this time, is given a blaring fanfare; the intruder is then supposed to give them something, either money or some other thing; it can be a penny or even a groundnut seed.

These groups remain at their posts till noon when the Tindana will blow his whistle from the village to call them back. They bring from the different directions all that they have gathered and hand it all to the Tindana to make a sacrifice.

The whole group then follow the Tindana to each of the four sacred groves of the village. At each grove, they surround it and blow their whistles following the Tindana's lead. When this ceremony is completed, the sacred whistles are put back in their string net bag and carried by one Tindana followed by all the Tindanas in procession to the principal Tindana's house. Here, about 200 yards away in front of the house, the Tindanas and people go round a few times in single file procession singing solemnly. Then they return in front of the house and hold a real big Golgo dance till they are tired. It is on this day that a mock sowing takes place also.

On the day after the Golg'yiis, that is on the 16th day after the appearance of the moon, is what they call Golinbeon. Golinbeon is a sacred river beyond the Tongo Hills. On this day the people go there in the morning where the Tindana will sacrifice to the river, after which ceremony fishing in the river is opened to all. Before that day nobody is normally allowed to fish there. The people spend nearly the whole day there fishing; they return in the evening and spend nearly the whole evening dancing Golgo in Wakii. Needless to say that the people usually catch plenty of fish on this day.

The 3rd day, which is the 17th day, is called Karigama. This day rightly speaking should be called Karegama - Gbebig day. On this day the people of Tenzuk and Wakii start dancing Golgo from about 6 a.m. in their respective villages. This Golgo dance in these two villages on this day is called Karigama. At about 9 a.m. the people of these two mentioned villages move to the village of Gorogo to join the people of this village in Golgo dance.

The Golgo dance in Gorogo for this day is called Gbebig. Everything comes to an end for this day at noon. On the 4th day is what is called Nachimet or Tindanwaa. This day's ceremony is not a public one. At about midnight Wagre Tindana, Kambangre Tindana, Wakii Tindana, Tambuog Tindana, Kpatar Tindana, Buchiug Tindana, and Digart Tindana will meet at the place of the ancestral Bagre called Mwuo at Tenzuk. There, one of them will perform the ceremonies of sacrifice, after which they will all choose one who that year will interceede with God to bring abundant harvest to the whole land. When he is chosen, then they all start to dance Golgo in circle while singing. In these songs they remind the one chosen, to bring good luck for that year and to try and see successfully to this. Normally the public do not go to observe this.

The 5th day is called Molwaa. On this day, Wakii Tindana will take the lead in calling down from heaven God's blessings on the approaching sowing season. He comes to Tenzuk with Buchiug Tindana, Tambog Tindana, Kpatar Tindana, Digal Tindana, and Wage Tindana to ask for God's blessing. Tambuorg Tindana comes third with the same duty. After him there steps out Kpatar Tindana whose role is to ascend the altar and pour libation with "pito" which has been brewed for the occasion by Digal Tindana. Digal Tindana besides bringing along the pito for the sacrifice has no other special role to play.

The 6th and last Tindana is Wage Tindana. His duty is to start the whole congregation off in Golgo dance for that day. He does this by giving a grunting shout after the libation ceremony.

The whole of this ceremony must take place at dawn before sunrise. It is usually very well attended by the people even though it takes place at an unusual hour.

One can see the people of the surrounding villages going up Tenzuk the whole night before dawn. The ritual observances throughout the Festival reaches its climax on this day. This is the most important part and day in the whole time of the festivities. The dancing on this day comes to an end about 7 a.m. when the people then return home to spend the rest of the day making up for the lost sleep.

Banaga Golgo is the 6th day. On this day strict silence is observed. Every one remains within his compound. All the things used for dancing are put outside the rooms so that the ancestors also can use them for their dance that day. This day is dedicated to the dead ancestors, hence the silence to respect them in their dance.

On the 7th day is the famous Golkwagre on Tenzuk. At about 3 p.m. on this day, all roads lead to Tenzuk. Visitors from all over the country far and wide usually come for this day's dance. On this day there is no special ceremony, just ordinary Golgo dance by everyone. It is the last and biggest dance at the place of their ancestral Bagre.

The following day, all again will gather at Tongorana's house to conclude the sacred Golgo month. This day is called Nayiriwaa; that is, Chief's house service. Because Tongorana is the head of the whole Tongo, this day's dance takes place in his presence at his house.

For this occasion, he makes neither a sacricice nor a speech. Throughout the festivity, he takes no part in their ritual performances because he is of a different social background. Tongorana belongs to a clan quite different from that of the clan celebrating this festival, as we shall see later. This final day's dance takes place from 3 p.m. to about 6 p.m. The different sections that are to dance Golgo start to arrive in groups about 2 p.m. Upon their arrival they stand in groups according to their sections for dancing.

When all the sections are dancing then Tongorana comes out and sits on the rostrum in front of his compound flanked by his right hand men. He usually wears no clothing besides a loin cloth and a skin. This is to observe the rule of this clan the people of which clan wear no clothes at this time.

This day is then the public conclusion of thiis festival. The private conclusion comes about seven days after this, when Buchiug Tindana will make a concluding sacrifice for the people to be allowed to wear clothes, the use of which was forbidden during this month. There is even yet another sacrifice to be made on account of this festival; this sacrifice is often made outside the festival month. This is usually a sacrifice of expiation for all those who have in anyway violated any of the laws during the month of the festival. And this brings us to what is forbidden during this period.

WHAT IS FORBIDDEN DURING THIS TIME

During these festivities, in fact throughout the whole of that month of Golgo, it is strictly forbidden to put on any clothing except what is worn round the waist. The traditional animal skin and a loin cloth are the prescribed dress for this time. All the school children belonging to the clans celebrating this Festival have to go to school during this time without a shirt on. Those children going to school outside their villages, carry their shirts under their armpits - till they are outside the boundary of their sections; and when coming back to the village after school in the evening, they undress at the precincts of their village.

The women are allowed to cover their breasts with a towel only. In the market place, on the paths, and at the wells, one can know women coming from the sections celebrating this Festival during this time because they wear nothing but these towels. Crying and fighting are strictly forbidden during this period, but funnily enough, as some observers have remarked, there is more fighting among the people of these clans during the actual dancing performances of this month than at any other time. During this month if one is even wounded in any way, he must not utter a cry. On no occasion, not even in the case of death, is anybody ever permitted to cry. If somebody dies during this time, he is buried without any fuss; and the dances must go on whatever happens.

Those who have in any way transgressed this custom during this period must pay a fine to the Tindana at the end of the month. Usually the find consists of a hen and some malt, so that with these, sacrifice of expiation can be made by the Tindana.

INSTRUMENTS

Golgo as an instrument has four other instruments to go with it. Each instrument is kept by a different section. First, there is the real Golgo which is a timpanum like drum. It is hidden in one of the sacred caves somewhere in Tenzuk. It is brought secretly to the village for drumming only at the time of the festival. Few people know where it is hidden. Tenzuk people are the custodians and players of this drum. The people give it a mysterious origin. It is not necessary for the dances. It is sacrificed too regularly. It would seem that it was used years ago to give an alarm or warning from the hill top of an approaching enemy or disaster. It is quite portable and therefore the people were able to move it in and out the caves of Tenzuk easily. Such a thing which helped save their lives naturally became sacred. It does not give a fitting rhythm to the movement of Golgo dance. Its drumming seems to be out of place when the people are dancing. Going with the Golgo drum is the Gol'laa. It is a calabash covered with a skin for drumming also. It, also, seems to be out of place when Golgo dance is being performed. It seems to have been added by a sorcerers prescription. This Gol'laa is being kept in a village called Digaar. On the day of festivities people from this village play the Gol'laa while Tenzuk people play their Golgo. There is also what they call the Kpatuur; a stick about 6 feet long with a bundle of feathers surmounting it. Possibly another whimsical addition caused by the sorcerer.

There are two Kpatuurs. All seem to agree that the real traditional one is that kept by Wakii people; and that Yinduuri people only have an imitation one. During the dances the Kpatuurs are thrown up and down, waved and shaken. They play the role of a ceremonial flag. The dancing on Tenzuk usually concludes with a mock fight by the two Kpatuurs, and the Wakii one is usually the victor.

Finally, there are the sacred whistles which have already been mentioned.

Needless to say, all these different kinds of articles possessed by the different villages (which are of the same clan) must be regularly sacrificed to. On the days of general Golgo dance, all these are brought to the gathering for dancing.

LEGENDARY ORIGIN OF THESE INSTRUMENTS

According to the story, the Golgo drum represents a legendary beggar who at one time was going a begging in villages around here. One day he suddenly disappeared leaving behind him his staff and calabash, the usual possessions of beggars around here. The socerer of the village then advised that the possessions of the beggar must be treasured preciously and sacrificed to. A drum was made to represent the beggar himself which drum is the Golgo drum now kept by Tenzuk people. The calabash into which the people dropped their gifts to him is now the Gol'laa which is covered like a drum and played by Digaar people during Golgo celebrations. His staff, which is the Kpatuur, is the one possessed by Wakii people.

CONCLUSION ON THE FESTIVALS AND DANCE

Golgo and Gingango are the main dances of the people of Tongo just as Daa and Bogran are their main feasts. Besides these two important dances, there are other dances less known such as Yongo danced by Baari people, Sinyaga and Baala danced by nearly everybody. Mention is already made of Sankwigi which is danced by women only. Women can and do take their part in the dances also even though they are mainly for men.

The dance that comes up frequently in the year is Baala dance. It comes on occasions like funerals, marriages, the home coming from the South of an important member of the family, etc; It is a dance that is imported within a comparatively few years, most probably from Kusasi land. It has spread all over Tongo and a great part of the Upper and Northern Regions.

At the beginning of this century, when the white men first arrived in the then Northern Territories, there were many works to be done for which communal labour was required. In order to keep a good spirit among the workers, players were often employed to provide music with Goji (the local violin) for them to dance Baala during their resting hours.

It is performed by either gentle or vigorous shaking of the head and shoulders while going in a circle with slow movement of the feet.

Besides the two big festivals of Daa and Bogran (the Golgo) there are, also, two other festivals; Tinlebgre which is celebrated by the Nabdans and those Talensis bordering their lands; and Tingwana celebrated by the Gurine (Frafra) speaking people under Tongo such as Winkongo and Pwalugu. The Tinlebgre of the Nabdans and Tingwana have the same meaning as Daa and Bogran Festivals, and are celebrated almost immediately after Bogran. Usually their celebrations last only a day or two. They have their traditional sacred groves where a few elders make sacrifice with a few goats and hens. After that each family then celebrates privately for a day or two. No doubt this is all copied from the Talensis.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE TALENSIS

IN SHORT

When a young man wants to marry a girl he has met or known, he finds a day and goes to the house of the girl with a companion. He washes himself clean and wears only a loin cloth and goat skin to go there for the first time. The reason why he does not wear clothes is that as it is the first time he is going there, he must expose his body to the girl and house people so that they will see that he has no serious bodily illness.

While on the way to the house, the companion must take the lead. When they arrive at the house of the girl, they go straight inside and greet the mother first, then the father of the girl second. It is the companion who greets first and introduces the purpose of their visit; "this my friend has found a friend in the person of your daughter and has come to ask for her to come and be giving him water to drink"; he tells the parents almost literally something like this. On this first visit they do not stay long; it is just to

introduce the girl's boy friend to the family.

The parents of the girl will ask him to come again or send his father. When the man returns home he informs his parents of the results of the visit. The young man or his father will go on the 3rd day after the 1st visit. From this second visit, the man continues to go regularly at least every third day and at most every week or two.

The official transactions are actually carried out by the two heads of families; while the young man himself merely goes on visit to the girl's family. At each visit either by the parent or the boy himself two or more killed guinea fowls are taken each time, with some tobacco and cola-nuts; some of the tobacco and cola-nuts with the guinea fowl to be given to the mother and the rest to the father. During one of these visits some millet will be taken to the girl's mother.

D E N G R E

The visits and transcations will go on till one day the mother of the girl asks for a deposit of 3 hoes with 300 carroes. At present as there are no more carroes, £ 5 will be given with the 3 hoes.

Even the 3 hoes are now being dropped and very often they demand a bed sheet, a hat and the £ 5 as deposit. This deposit is received by the girl's parents to show that their daughter is now actually betrothed to the man. It is a sign of agreement and promise on the part of the girl's parents that they will give him their daughter in marriage. Usually when there are many suitors, as soon as they learn that the girl's parents have received the customary deposit, from one of them, the rest stop going there.

A short while after the deposit has been made, the mother will appoint a day for the fiance to come for his wife. On the appointed day in the night about 10 o'clock after making a sacrifice to the ancestors to allow him to steal and bring home safely his wife, he then sets out with one companion. He arrives there normally when everybody is asleep. When he arrives into the house, the mother who already knows what is to happen, pretends to be asleep. She is awakened by the finance and his companion; no special greetings, no gifts this time. The girl's mother then wakes up a young boy or a man in the house quietly with the daughter. The man or boy from the house will accompany the girl and the fiance with his companion to a safe distance and then hand over the girl to them and return quietly to the house.

In the morning of the following day the girl's mother will inform the husband and the house that their daughter ran away in the night. Everybody knows the meaning of this kind of statement. On the third day after he has taken the girl away he must return to the house with at least two guinea fowls and tobacco to greet his in-laws. He gives the guinea fowls and some of the tobacco to the mother in-law, perhaps also cola-nuts, to the father-in-law. On this visit he informs the in-laws officially that they should not worry of the whereabouts of their daughter for she is safe in his keeping.

Z O R I B

Then after he has gone the father-in-law asks some men from the house to go and find out where his daughter is. These are usually the girl's brothers or at least relatives. When they get to the house, the new husband will have to slaughter a goat and some hens. All the meat except the waist part of the goat will be taken back to the girl's parents. The waist of the goat must be left for the new wife. All this is called Zorib.

TINDAAN LUOR

A few days after the people have finished with the zorib, the son -in-law must take about five hens (killed), one guinea fowl and one living cock. The guinea fowl and the five hens will be for the mother-in-law and house people; the living cock will be for the head of the nuclear lineage.

This custom of giving five hens, one guinea fowl and one living cock is called "Tindaan luor". This Tindaan luor custom is performed by a medium called "Pogsama". This pogsama is the nephew of the new husband in-laws. Once the Tindaan luor has been accepted the man and girl then become really husband and wife. This Tindaan luor is the essential part of marriage. Dr. Fortis in his book "The Dynamics of Clanship among the Talensi" calls this custom "Placation gifts". P. 230.

The marriage then becomes actually regularized when the bridegroom's people send the "Placation gifts" and the pogsama goes first to the head of the girl's medial or maximal lineage, and gives him a live cock, the most important item among the placation gifts. By accepting the live cock, the lineage head signifies the acquiescence of the whole lineage in the marriage and the blessing of the ancestors thereon. Whether or not the bride price (dowry) is paid, the girl is thereafter the jurally recognized wife of the bridegroom.

B I E R E

After the Tindaan luor, the bridegroom still has to send millet and four or more guinea fowls to the mother-in-law. This is called "Biere". The Tindaan luor was a more than necessary thing to acquiesce all those related, especially the chief head of the girl; now the bridegroom has to placate the real parents of his wife - hence the Biere. This Biere actually is not necessary; some people do not observe it; some people make it a point to observe it because its omission is a sign that the bridegroom is poor.

D I E M D U G

Finally the bridegroom will return to the in-laws within a few days to break the idea of his being a visitor or stranger to the house. Up to then each time he went to their house he considered himself and was considered as a visitor, a stranger. And so in order to break this idea he has to go there with some cola nuts, tobacco and two or three killed guinea fowls. This called "Diemdug".After the diemdug, the bridegroom becomes then a son-in-law; a member so to say, of the family officially.

SULLIK - BRIDE PRICE

Last but not least then comes the bride-price. This may be demanded by the wife's parents at any time. It consists of four cows only. Normally the first one can be got before the first child is born. Two cows can be asked for after the birth of the first child. The fourth cow is usually given during the old age of the wife or even after her death. This fourth cow is supposed to be killed in sacrifice of thanksgiving. According to the practice here, four sheep equal a cow, eight goats a cow and £15 also a cow. And so when one decides to give money or sheep or goats in place of cows he has to give according to this standard value of a cow. This bride-price is called "Sullik".

The demand for this bride-price must be done through the pogsama. It is he who will inform the husband of his father-in-law's demand for the cows. he, the pogsama will have to take the cows to the wife's parents also if the husband agrees to give them, just as it was his duty to carry the placation gifts of the Tindaan luor. To sum up this pogsama's role in marriage performances we say that he serves as a necessary witness to the jural transactions between the two families.

CONCLUSION

Within recent years there has cropped up a bad practice or two in marriage customs here. The first bad practice is the promising of daughters while yet infants, to some people and receiving in advance the bride-price. There are examples of some people who have already received the bride-price of their infant daughters and this from more than even one person. Poverty is the sole reason of this bad practice.

The second new practice which is becoming common is the stealing or robbing of a girl from her parents. Ofter parents send their daughters to the market only to learn in the evening or the following morning that the daughter has been taken by a supposed fiance to his house. This is due to the fact that when sometimes there are many suitors, and a suitor who thinks that his chances of marrying the girl are nil, he then tries to get the girl by stealing.

Or the reason for stealing the girl may be that he has been courting the girl for a long time and has already spent a lot of things on the parents and house people but still they are not decided to give him the girl in marriage and so the only thing to do is to steal this girl. Whenever a girl is taken by stealth, the parents of the man plead and persuade her parents to agree and let the marriage be regularized. Sometimes her parents refuse for the marriage to be regularized and the girl may remain with the man for months or even years. The danger in this is that the girl's parents if they can get their daughter back someday even after ten years can marry her lawfully away to anybody else and keep all the children she might have in her state of unlawful marriage.

S U M M A R Y

(1) MOSORE'S FAMILY

(1) Mosore (2) Wives (3) Sons

1. Nakamun)
2. Nanbogra) Names of Mosore's Sons and Daughters
3. Nansagsra)
4. Salifu)
5. Zangina)
6. Lamisi)
7. Tene) Daughters

II TONGO CHIEFS SINCE MOSORE

1. Mosore	2. Segsini	3. Nanbogra
4. Bogiyelit	5. Nadiegretkumpatoo	6. Kusii
7. Belinsale (Nasale)	8. Leebnwana	9. Belinbeog
10. Lebekura	11. Sapieleg	12. Liebri
13. Sangwang	14. Bangelalebzuur	15. Paheban
16. Kuwas	17. Nalebsing	18. Bupaar
19. Kwuim Kunduzuor	20. Lebhikura	21. Tinsunglobisagit
22. Biyog	23. Ninkansongkungarnir	24. Pilbazaa
25. Kunibangbeog	26. Denteskemkonghaam	27. Nanaambiong
28. Naasalema.		

III TALENSI MONTHS

Daa	Mwarig	-	October
Bogran	"	-	November
Kabulihim	"	-	December
Kwuort	"	-	January
Goldiema	"	-	February
Golgo	"	-	March
Sikweng	"	-	April
Simahug	"	-	May
Nwaruwuk	"	-	June
Nachiog	"	-	July
Nabiit	"	-	August
Kwuom	"	-	September

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Atene	-	Monday
Atalata	-	Tuesday
Alariba	-	Wednesday
Alamis	-	Thursday
Arizuma	-	Friday
Asibi	-	Saturday
Lahir	-	Sunday

DANCES IN TONGO

1. Golgo
2. Gingango
3. Baala
4. Yongo
5. Sinyaga
6. Sankoigi

FESTIVALS

Daa Bogran Golgo Tinlebgre Tingwana

SUMMARY ON GOLGO FESTIVAL

Dance	Place	Time
1. Golg'yiis	Wakii	15th of the appearance of March morning and evening
2. Golimbeong	At the River and Wakii	16th day morning at the River; night at Wakii
3. Karigama and Gbebig	Wakii, Tenzuk, Gorogo	17th day 7-12 a.m.
4. Nachimol	Tenzuk	18th day at dawn
5. Molwaa	Tenzuk	19th day from Dawn to 7 a.m.
6. Banagagolgo	Silence everywhere	20th day.
7. Golg' Kwagre	Tenzuk	21st day 3-6 p.m.
8. Naabyirwaa	Tongorana's House	22nd day 3-6 p.m.

DAA FESTIVALS

Dance	Place	Time
Gingango	Puhig on Mosore's grave	5th of Kwuom to 12th daa
Gingangonaad	General Rest	13th of daa
Gingango	Baari	14th of daa 6 p.m.
Daa Day	Celebrations all round	15th of daa
Timpana Dance	Tongorana's House	16th day of Daa 7 p.m.
Benna	On Mosore's grave	17th of daa 4 p.m.
Yongo	Tongorana's House	18th of daa 4 p.m.
Sankwigi	Baari & Tongorana's House	19th of Daa at 4 p.m.

By FATHER JOSEPH AWIAH - CATHOLIC MISSION

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